

NOTES OF A WESTERN TRIP.

Queer Happenings and Anecdotes Encountered on the Way.

Mackinac, on the island of that name, is not a typical Western watering place, but it is perhaps the best summer resort in the West. It is purely Western maintained and frequented by persons from all over the Western country, but it is situated high up and appears to be typical of Petoskey, Lake Michigan, and the like—cleaner and more crowded resorts. But Mackinac is a decidedly interesting place for an Eastern man to visit. The beauty of its surroundings is marvellous. A high, almost treeless-sided rock, it rises out of the churning waters that connect Lakes Huron and Michigan, a great mass of dense foliage with a lighter green where the water is shallow, and confronting a dark blue sea dotted with other beautiful islands.

It is reached only by boats that make their landing opposite the spot where John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company established one of its main trading posts as far back as the century began to wrest a commercial supremacy in land that had been the work-ground of no white men, except priests and explorers. The old trading post is now a hotel called the John Jacob Astor House, and the great trading room, where the Indians threw down their bundles of skins to be sorted and valued by the factor's clerks, is now a ballroom. The building that was once the mission house has become a hotel, called the Mission House, and all around the two are the stores and cottages, the hotels and boarding houses, shooting galleries, peanut stands, lively stables, and photographic parlors that make up a diminutive but close-huddled summer town and a half-decayed, dead-and-alive winter village, over which at all times glisten the white walls of a fortress manned by our troops, still revealing here and there, the heavy wooden slatted towers of the blockhouse that offered a haven against turbulent Indians in days long gone.

There are Indians there yet, but they are of the strictly modern type, more white than red and more French than Indian. They live in houses and for livelihood fish, peddle, and row visitors around the island. They can awaken romantic memories only in the minds of the younger readers of Hiawatha.

But Eastern folks would call Mackinac a very dull place for all except old ladies and gentlemen invalids, and true lovers. If it were true as we all pretend that wat ring reports are places for rest, Mackinac would be the best place of the kind in all the world, except the deck of a slow ship. But in reality, those who go there on summer vacations seek change, and not merely the change of rest, but of occupation. After a day or two has passed the sightseers drive through the woods, and have seen the so-called English Landing, the coast fort, the house-tops that mark the route of an old frontier fort, the fairy arch, and the monumental rock, there is nothing else to do but sit down and see the people land from the lake boats or take a row around the island.

Of course, this limitation is not felt by couples who are in love. The woods are ever new to them, and that sequestered and rather desolate bit of sandy beach where the British landed in ancient times is fresh and delightful to them on every succeeding day—if no one else is there when they visit it.

Mackinac is a perfect heaven for lovers. The Grand Hotel, the best of the inns, has its front all dotted with little balconies, one to every other window and each strongly suggestive of the prettinesses one in "Romeo and Juliet." On a distant balcony I have seen a lovely girl appear to hold a long whispered conversation with her beau three times after leaving him for the night below stairs—once when she reached her room, again when she thought of another thing to say before disappearing, and yet again, in her wrapper, after she had made herself otherwise ready for bed. And at that time there were other lovers talking from one balcony to another, others in the grove in front of the great hotel, others on the board walks leading to the village, and still others, I doubt not, in the bushes and trees of the woods, the broken banks of the island. The girl modality of this colony of lovers contained many very pretty faces and figures, and I was struck by the fact that, as in every case of those of the best families in the West, I was charmed, therefore, to see many of them take nothing but a left hand to the right hand of whom they came, and talk to each other and to their male friends, with touches held between their hands—held never so graciously, but with a decided meaning.

Is it any nothing of this sort in Duthie, Marquette, Minn., or any other city that I visited but the e. and customs if it is one of the best cities in the West?

I overheard two ladies talking to one another about the porch of the Grand Hotel, and the dialogue was thoroughly Occidental:

"We are going to the grand hotel and see me on your way home," said one.

"Is it far?" the other asked.

"Yes, it is," replied number one. "It's only twenty-four miles from your way. You can get to my place in a day and a night from Cincinnati. Come, won't you?"

"Yes, certainly," replied number two.

The Italics are mine, so to speak. The two women might no more of travelling a day and a night in the car than I could, but they would think of going to Brooklyn—not so much, in fact.

There are two funny characters in Mackinac now, however, who are still making the making of the trip to their bullwhip. One is an old button-headed bairn driver, who is so tantalized by the boys and ways of the place that he is continually running about, and getting into trouble. But being 16 he has a sense of humor. He ought to charge a quarter of a dollar for carrying the baggage of the poor lassies, and the village, the village, but the other day he exacted a dollar of a vi to the house of a native. The native hunted up the drayman and the drayman consented to charge the drayman four times the right fee.

"Well, sir," said the driver, "he axed me what was my name. I told him it was Corrigan. 'I'll give you a dollar for your trouble,' says he. 'It is my rule to charge a quarter to all who call me names, but with a name like mine, I don't care to pay a dollar. And, sort of course.'

Then there is a dandy with a sub-cellular voice, who is continually running about in anything to stop him. On John Jacob Astor House. He stands on the wharf and, with the voice of a frightened delivery boy, of this rascally bunch, calls out again, while a crowd gathers to hear him:

"Astor House! Astor House! I will do remember the old family honor, when I am dead and buried, to the last drop of my blood."

He is a remarkably bright boy. He has just grown into trousers, and they make him the handsomest boy in the parish. He nearly got out of his clothes, however, when he heard that he was never, ever, going to be a man again.

"Blazer," says I, "you're all right, ez I can talk an' away he scots to get the bairn."

Now if that one thing a bairn hates more'n another that thing is vallet dog. They hate dogs, anyhow, but vallet dog is gall an' wormwood to 'em. Well, Blazer been poor, well fixed up to vallet, the sight of him'll set his tail up fast enough, an' for Blazer without his tail as us a usal thing tidy sandwiched between his legs, as if he were in motion, fear of the small boy and the thin legs. But according to Joe Stavertorth was never just such a bairn as Blazer.

"No, Blazer hasn't got no pedigree, ez I know on, but he's half as tall as I am, then I don't know what he is."

Joe might as well have said, or the dog had started in suddenly from where he was listening, as to wait upon. In Canada, however, he was a good boy, and the husband for whom he would expect to work is the same way. But what work? A breakaway, half-mad and half-mad, from the house, and the work-table. She was the daughter of the proprietor, then washing the dishes used in the house, and had prepared a service, and some such, for the house, but she would have considered herself a lady perhaps, and even titled to be waited upon.

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